

Missouri Deafblind Technical Assistance

Fact Sheet

The Importance of the Missouri Deafblind Census

The Missouri Deafblind Census connects families, educators, and other service providers to services and supports. The Federal law, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), requires the annual conducting of a census of all individuals with deafblindness, ages birth through 21 years. The Missouri Deafblind Technical Assistance Project conducts the annual census in the state of Missouri.

One purpose of the census is to inform the United States Congress and the United States Department of Education about these infants, children, and youth with deafblindness. Another purpose is to help each state's deafblind project identify some of the services and supports needed by these individuals, their families, and the agencies that support them. By identifying individuals with deafblindness in the State of Missouri, the Missouri Deafblind Project is able to provide connections for families, educators, and other service providers to supports and other services.

The Census consists of demographic information, such as an individual's date of birth, gender, living setting, education setting and so on, along with descriptive information such as cause of deafblindness. The Missouri Deafblind Project uses this demographic and descriptive information in many ways.

When a school district, program, or agency reports an individual with deafblindness, the Project sends back to the professional reporting the individual a packet of information that summarizes not only the services and supports the Project can provide the district, program, or agency, but also information about other services and supports available on a local, state, and a national level. A similar packet is sent to families. Both packets include a simple form for the recipient to complete and return to the Project. This form is used by families and professionals to ask for specific support and services from the Project.

The Project also uses the demographic and descriptive information provided by the Census to plan specific activities such as topical workshops (past workshops included Cortical Visual Impairment and psychoeducational assessment of individuals with deafblindness). Through the Census, the Project documented a large number of transition age youth (ages 14 through 21 years) with deafblindness in Missouri and, therefore, now offers the expertise of a Transition Specialist to assist districts and families develop and implement effective transition plans that consider the unique needs of individuals who have both a visual and auditory impairment.



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